

Odds are you'll like these...

Numismagram Newsletter #22 (VI/2019)



A highly anticipated annual sporting event, the 145th running of the Kentucky Derby occurred just after our last newsletter and the results were, shall we say, a bit unorthodox. The apparent winner, Maximum Security, was indeed the first to cross the finish line, but an objection was raised shortly thereafter by the would-be runner-up, Country House, claiming that the former had obstructed the latter's path, along with two other horses. As this was a violation of the race's interference rules, Maximum Security was disqualified, making the long-shot Country House the winner. As you can imagine, the eventual victor, at 65-1 odds, surely did some heavy lifting for his ticket holders, assuming that they hadn't already pitched them in the trash in the seconds following the finish...



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On this numismatically important topic, gambling and games of chance have served as a form of entertainment and excitement during much of recorded history in one way or another, and many of these games necessitate some form of accounting during play. In early modern Europe, jetons (tokens or gaming counters) were commonly employed for these purposes and allowed for skilled engravers to promote their artistry. One such engraver was Simon van der Passe, born in Utrecht circa 1585.



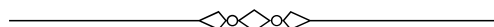
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Van der Passe worked in England from 1616–1621/2, having founded a school after being exempted from the royal monopoly given previously to Nicholas Hilliard. This exemption allowed for the "graving and imprinting medailles" and small portraits of the king, and van der Passe utilized his technique for the production of numerous series of jetons, initially employing portraits of the Stuarts, James I and later Charles I with his wife, Henrietta Maria. Though Simon would return to Holland in 1621/2, his London-based school continued under the management of his brother, William. Subsequent issues of these jetons would feature Gustav Adolph and his wife, Maria Eleonora, the sovereigns of England, 'classical portraits' of historical and biblical figures, 'street cries,' and the commonwealth.



(https://shoutout.wix.com/so/70MiRoqN1/c?w=LzfHPp_44LJNXA4UkEC4OANK785ySdnORGC2wY7A3o8.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cDovL251bWlzbWFncmFt)

Of even greater interest and debate among numismatists over the past century has been the method of manufacture of these jetons. Their appearance at first glance would lead one to believe that they have been individually engraved owing to their incuse design. It is thought that, in fact, these ornate counters were skillfully cast and polished in order to generate this 'faux-engraved' effect.



In addition to the pieces above, this month's upload includes a couple exquisitely toned Swiss shooting medals, a few more issues from the Belgo-Dutch Society of the Friends of Medalllic Art, an extremely interesting and rare wooden medal muling types of Victoria and Horatio Nelson, and an array of other attractive specimens, including four other van der Passe gaming jetons.



(https://shoutout.wix.com/so/70MiRoqN1/c?w=pxiHQ9sBQ-XOIFetFe6D-AALdu9B5_yxz87U2qdezhc.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cDovL251bWlzbWFncmFtLmNvbS9pbmZlbnRvcnkiLCJyJoi)

Finally, be on the lookout for another mini upload later this month featuring the ever-popular topic of skulls and skeletons, a number of the pieces being types which we have not offered before...

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